

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (currently amended) A method for desulfurizing hydrocarbon oils comprising:

bringing a hydrocarbon oil containing at least one sulfur compound selected from the group consisting of thiophene compounds, benzothiophene compounds, and dibenzothiophene compounds ~~or a hydrocarbon oil further containing aromatic hydrocarbons~~ into contact with a zeolite selected from the group consisting of proton-type faujasite zeolite, proton-type mordenite and proton-type β -zeolite, and having the silica/alumina ratio of 100 mol/mol or less and the content of cations other than proton of 5 mass % or less, and/or a solid ~~acid~~ superacid catalyst selected from the group consisting of sulfated zirconia, sulfated alumina, sulfated tin oxide, sulfated iron oxide, tungstated zirconia, and tungstated tin oxide and/or activated carbon containing a transition metal oxide.

2. (currently amended) The method according to claim 1, wherein the hydrocarbon oil further contains aromatic hydrocarbons and sulfur compounds contained in the hydrocarbon oil are reacted among themselves and/or with aromatic

hydrocarbons by bringing the hydrocarbon oil into contact with the zeolite and/or the solid ~~acid~~ superacid catalyst.

3. (currently amended) The method according to claim 2, wherein the sulfur compounds in the hydrocarbon oil and heavy sulfur compounds produced by the reaction among the sulfur compounds contained in the hydrocarbon oil and/or by the reaction of the sulfur compounds with aromatic hydrocarbons are adsorbed by [[a]] said solid ~~acid~~ superacid catalyst ~~and/or activated carbon containing a transition metal oxide.~~

4. (previously presented) The method according to claim 1, wherein the hydrocarbon oils are desulfurized to a content of the total sulfur compounds (as sulfur) of 1 ppm or less.

5-8. (cancelled)

9. (currently amended) The method according to claim [[8]] 1, wherein the solid superacid catalyst has a specific surface area of 100 m²/g or more.

10. (cancelled).

11. (previously presented) The method according to claim 1, wherein the hydrocarbon oil contains aromatic hydrocarbons as major components.

12. (original) The method according to claim 11, wherein the aromatic hydrocarbon is at least one hydrocarbon selected from the group consisting of benzene, alkylbenzene having 7-14 carbon atoms, naphthalene, and alkyl naphthalene having 11-18 carbon atoms.

13. (previously presented) The method according to claim 1, wherein the hydrocarbon oil is kerosene or gas oil.

14. (original) The method according to claim 13, wherein the kerosene or gas oil is desulfurized in a fuel cell vehicle in which kerosene or gas oil is used as an on-board reforming fuel.

15-17. (cancelled).

18. (previously presented) The method according to claim 2, wherein the hydrocarbon oils are desulfurized to a content of the total sulfur compounds (as sulfur) of 1 ppm or less.

19. (previously presented) The method according to claim 3, wherein the hydrocarbon oils are desulfurized to a content of the total sulfur compounds (as sulfur) of 1 ppm or less.

20. (cancelled).